

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are all the claims pending in the application. New claims 14 and 15 have been added to further define the invention. Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Personal Interview with the Examiner

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to their representative during the personal interview conducted on September 27, 2005. In the interview, Applicants' representative discussed the difference between the presently claimed invention and US Patent 6,327,929 to Yanagisawa (hereinafter Yanagisawa).

Applicants' representative pointed out that Yanagisawa fails to disclose that a stiffness of a slider is higher on one end than on another end, due to the configuration of the guide elements, wherein the guide elements are those on which the slider is guided. Specifically, with reference to Fig. 1, Yanagisawa discloses a base 10, and a slider 18 (taken for example, but the argument below equally applies to slider 16), wherein the slider 18 is guided by guide elements 14. However, the guide elements 14 have the same configuration and number, whereby, "due to the configuration of the guide elements" the stiffness of Yanagisawa's slider 18 is the same on each end. This relationship holds true, no matter where the slider 16 is positioned. In this regard, although the stiffness of slider 18 may change based on the position of slider 16, such a difference in stiffness is not due to "the configuration of the guide elements" as claimed. Instead, such a difference in stiffness is due to the connection between the drive element (slider 16 and associated drive 24) as it is connected to the slider 18 via the support stage 42.

Stated another way, Yanagisawa discloses an arrangement wherein the connection of the drive 24 to slider 18 via support stage 42 increases the stiffness of slider 18 depending on the position of slider 16. But with respect to slider 18, slider 16 (together with guides 17) is not a "guide element" because slider 18 is not guided by slider 16 (or the guides 17); instead slider 18 is driven by slider 16 via connection through support stage 42 (and guides 19). Thus, this arrangement is akin to the one shown in Fig. 5A of the present specification, but having a beefed-up connection between the drive element (52, Yanagisawa's 24) and the slider (13,

Yanagisawa's 18). Yet again, however, in this arrangement the increased stiffness is not "due to the configuration of the guide elements", wherein the "guide elements" are the ones on which the slider is guided.

For at least any of the above reasons, Yanagisawa fails to disclose that "due to the configuration of the guide elements, a stiffness of the slider, in a yawing direction of the slider, in an area where the drive element is provided is made higher than that in an area opposite the area where the drive element is provided", as set forth in claim 1.

New Claims

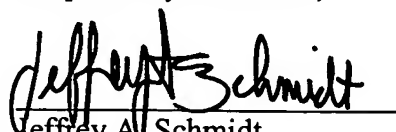
New claims 14 and 15 have been added to further define the ways in which the stiffness of the slider can be increased in the area where the drive element is provided. Support for these claims can be found at least at page 6, 2nd full paragraph.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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